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THE CELESTIAL FEMALE

ONE OF UNGLE SAM'S COLOR PROBLEMS

*With wide-flung arm perplexed he stands,
Black, Red, Brown, Yellow, on his weary hands;
Redskins he smeared out, Blacks he ate,
Dragon and Rising Sun, excluded, wait.*

THE RECKONING OF HEAVEN

By ALFRED BULL

Author of "JAUNTS OFF THE HIGH ROAD,"
"THE TOWNSHIP OF JEFFERSON," etc., etc.

"Death is the Reckoning of Heaven"
—*Chinese Proverb*



ALFRED BULL, PUBLISHER

IRVING PARK, ILL.

1912

PS3503
U53R4
1912

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\$1.00

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No. 1.

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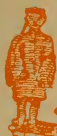
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THE RECKONING
OF HEAVEN

Une Fantaisie Chinoise



CHAPTER I

Ta-yu learns of a distinguished relative, one Uncle Sam, hitherto unknown to him, and resolves to visit him.

WHEN Ta-yu's kind friend, the reverend Mr. Kitcat, foreign missionary, chanced to mention the great country from which he, the black-coated one, had so recently embarked for China—



and, in particular, that lanky and benignant individual, Uncle Sam, ruler of its destinies, Ta-yu was all attention.

On speaking further of Uncle Sam, as blending all nationalities into one harmonious and vastly improved whole, Ta-yu grasped his friend's meaning at once; for Ta-yu knew something of blends, whereby color, strength and flavor are greatly benefited. As much may not be said for the missionary's well-meant and repeated efforts at Ta-yu's conversion. For a sufficient small sum Ta-yu would, after the fashion of his kind, have professed all expected reformation and belief; but to make this really part and parcel of

himself, clearing his attic of all inherited lumber to make room for it—this was absurd, almost an impossible expectation.

Similarly, when Mr. Kitcat discoursed of one of the five elements, water, making various foolish suggestions for its use, externally, internally and as a means of grace, Ta-yu was not to be cajoled into accepting such sophistries. A native bonze might very properly spurt a mouthful over sacrifices in token of purification, or over relatives of the honored dead with similar intent; but Ta-yu hoped to be able to declare, with his latest breath, that he had wantonly wasted no water himself.

Uncle Sam possessed so attract-

ive a personality, as set forth by his votary, that a longing thenceforward possessed Ta-yu to enjoy his acquaintance. Mr. Kitcat's portrait was in high lights; no dark shadow, exclusion for instance, was suggested. Innocently referred to by the missionary, while hipped with home-sickness, his words bore fruit, arousing ambition and discontent in the follower of Confucius; and confusion came eventually to the heathen one from the good man's ill-advised and overflowing patriotism.

Ta-yu, Coolie of *Amoy*, in the province of *Fuh-keen*, had been an orphan from early infancy. In the year of the "small knife" rebellion the black plague had taken his

mother; Ta-yu being picked, like an unripe berry, from her stiffening arms. His father, Chang-yu, once a petty leader under Tan-keng-chin, was "cut into a thousand pieces" the same year, resting ever since, his severed head between his knees, the uncomplaining tenant of one of a row of glazed, earthen pots or jars, on a hillside overlooking the native quarter of *Amoy*. Chang-yu patiently awaited that suitable and honorable interment which the rites of *Feng-shui* (good luck) demanded at the hands of his only son, Ta-yu.

These ceremonies, Ta-yu knew, were contingent upon his own discovery of the required number of *taels*—now, as for so long a time

past, alas, wholly beyond his reach. Until this duty to his revered parent was accomplished, naught but disgrace and dishonor could be Ta-yu's own portion. He revolved many schemes in the vain hope of retrieving his past, and thus arousing some hopefulness in his own future. The words of the missionary echoed and re-echoed through his brain, until Ta-yu waited only on opportunity before taking the momentous step.

Among other scraps of knowledge, eagerly absorbed, Ta-yu had learned that Uncle Sam was rich enough to give all a farm, and that he customarily came to town riding upon a pony—and wealthy mandarins bestrode the China ponies

with which Ta-yu was familiar! If some little confusion of legendary heroes existed in Ta-yu's mind, the missionary and his compatriots were to blame for it. A feather in Uncle Sam's hat too, doubtless from the peacock, no mere "flower," or "green" feather, but a full "three-eyed" one!

The costume was a trifle eccentric, but Uncle Sam was rich enough to disregard convention. If a trifle bizarre, in Ta-yu's conception, with his striped, strapped nankeens, and his vest and hat-band spangled with stars—well, that was a matter of individual taste and preference. Ta-yu might be willing, he allowed, to rig himself out similarly, in the fashion

of that country, could he only accumulate *maces* and *candareens* enough.

That the missionary was, after all, a bit of a joker, secure in the knowledge that the poor coolie could never judge for himself, and therefore indulged in some farcical and grimly humorous descriptions, never occurred to Ta-yu. Would a bonze joke? "Impossible," he decided. "Does a tiger eat a fly? Can a Buddhist priest carry an olive on his smooth-shaven pate?"

CHAPTER II

*Ta-yu hears dame Fortune's
faint tap at his door.*

AT length opportunity came, with a splash of mud and a glint of sunshine.

One day, crowding into itself, as some days will, all possible mishap and ill-luck, Ta-yu lounged in the doorway of the nondescript hovel which



he called home, disheartened and beaten, awaiting the summons to the evening meal.

The hut stood by the water's edge, a crazy patchwork of decaying boat-timbers and matting, of cracked potsherds daubed with mud and clay, crowned with rotting thatch and broken tiles, snuggled under the city wall, which alone saved it from utter collapse. Razor-back hogs and vagrant curs fought for refuse in the long, dark, narrow street; Ta-yu's wearied eyes sought relief in the panorama of the upper heights. Here picturesque but useless fortifications crowned outcropping granite of strange configuration, bathed in sunset rays, when all below was

dark. Nearer, the sinking sun lighted up the row of funereal pots so often in Ta-yu's thoughts; while, toward the city, beside a tall pagoda, flashed the stars and stripes, stiff in the offshore breeze as if pasted on the sky, and marking the American consulate.

A mangy dog, scurrying across a rocky flagstone in the foul street, splashed Ta-yu from head to foot with reeking filth. With a vindictive glance after his scampering foe Ta-yu entered the house.

Steaming rice, though salted, and eked out with a particle of salt fish, was less savory when a salt tear or two splashed into the dish. So he arose hastily, kowtowed

respectfully to his foster-father, and left the house.

Making rapid progress along the rickety causeway, Ta-yu paused before a similar hovel, the outer walls decorated with black plasters (betokening the residence of a medical man), and rapped gently.

When admitted, Ta-yu steeled himself to utter disregard of the emptied phials and pill-boxes and used plasters that covered the walls—mutely eloquent testimonials to the doctor's skill, and returned to him as such by grateful patients—ignoring dry herbs and unfamiliar objects, designed to overwhelm the ignorant visitor and to attest professional status.

Ignoring them, Ta-yu addressed the learned man with a reckless courage and disregard of etiquette that startled his host, and surprised himself.

Ponderous spectacles, a straggling, wiry, white moustache, blue cotton breeches and rice-straw slippers, down-at-heel, sufficiently clothed that mummy-like personage, who listened quietly, secretly relieved that his impetuous visitor had no intention of running amuck.

The recital ended, the physician with upraised hand and claw-like nails commanded silence, the while he busied himself with his metal-covered pipe. Placing a few shreds of tobacco with the tweezers in the

bowl, he reached for a stick of smouldering punk, blew a glowing coal, and meditatively enjoyed two long-drawn whiffs. The weed exhausted, he leisurely removed the bowl, blew the ashes away, and cleansed the bowl and tube. Ta-yu waited, respectfully silent. Thus quickened, the doctor began:

“My son, I fear I myself am becoming affected by the modern evil spirit of unrest, since I say there are times that the dead must wait upon the living. Your father, Chang-yu, can content himself yonder a little longer. I have heard of this Uncle Sam, of whom the *fankwei* (foreign devil) spoke to you, and I know the dangers that beset the way.

“Since it hath pleased the Son of Heaven graciously to withdraw his imperial edict against his *heung-noo* (clamorous slaves) leaving the celestial kingdom, it is not for me to discover objections, but rather to assist you, if I may.”

The old fossil busied his trembling fingers with brush and ink, speedily offering to Ta-yu, for his inspection and signature, those necessary hieroglyphs which conveyed to himself all right, title and interest in everything material and personal possessed by Ta-yu, save only the ragged clothing which he then wore.

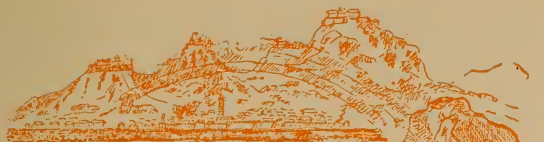
These possessions were not numerous: a one-eighth interest in that patched and battered antique,

the sampan, "the Delight of My Soul," moored in the river close by; a nearly whole and fairly clean sleeping-blanket; and, prospectively, four hundred *li* or cash due from the good doctor himself to Ta-yu for the carriage of water and other merchandise. Of course, also, a mortgage upon the afore-said earthenware pot, in which reposed the mortal remains of Chang-yu; morally, if not commercially, one of the most valuable assets hitherto controlled by Ta-yu, since he was contemplating an extended tour.

After the doctor had dwelt sufficiently upon the desirability of closing a transaction of this magnitude with an honorable neighbor of professional repute, instead of

attempting to deal with a dishonest *schroffer* (money changer) in the city proper, Ta-yu received his mess of pottage.

Two other documents were executed and placed in Ta-yu's eager hands. Laboriously deciphered by him, one was an order upon a native *comprador* in *Amoy* for transportation to *Canton*, thence to *Singapore*, or as much farther on the road to America as its net value would warrant. The Celestial Kingdom is so large, central and dominant, the rest of the world so small, no wonder both blundered in locating tiny objects on the outer rim of space. Also an introduction to that Columbian nation's consulate at *Canton*, speedily proven to possess no value whatever.



CHAPTER III

*Ta-yu accumulates experience
and capital for the journey,
arrives and prospers.*

THUS amply provided, having sold his birth-right, Ta-yu, in borrowed bravery, wandered next morning up the hillside "the Glorious Rest," to his father's jar, and burned beside it some paper models



of houses, boats and furniture, carefully prepared beforehand. He scattered the ashes over the pot; and, satisfied that Chang-yu was thus provided with all needed comforts, he left incense-sticks a-burning, and tearfully withdrew. As the long hallowed day closed, the skies were full of rain; a bow of promise curved against them in the East, gratefully accepted by Ta-yu as an omen of good fortune.

When Ta-yu reached *Canton*, and sought a passport to the land of his dreams, the native assistant of that busy individual, the American vice-consul, took but one glance at Ta-yu's hands, eloquent of labor, blunt in nail-ends, wanting in all

scholastic or aristocratic pretence. He passed his hand corroboratively over Ta-yu's shoulder, to find the hardened evidence of the coolie's bamboo pole; he laughed at the thought of passport to the promised land, and incontinently kicked poor Ta-yu off the premises.

But Ta-yu's mind was made up. The Occident having developed an irresistible force, the Orient seemed to present an immovable body; yet Ta-yu swerved at this critical moment, swaying as does a reed before the tempest, and thus avoided any material injury.

Ta-yu knew, by the testimony of his friend, the missionary, that he was seeking a land flowing with milk and honey; being once em-

barked on such a quest, he wisely disregarded all such seemingly insurmountable difficulties. Upon finding his small stock of money absurdly insufficient, all that he did to replenish it must be passed lightly over—detail would fill a volume.

In *Amoy, Canton, Hong Kong, Singapore*, he labored as a boy, helping the silk-weavers work their clumsy foot-looms, and pulling up the warp in conformity with the pattern. Afterward, he screeched the warning “yaw-ch” of the sedan-coolie; then importing (with his savings) a *Shanghai* wheelbarrow he patiently pushed it, piled mountainously with long *kaolang* (millet) or boxes of *poma-*

toes. Soon the barrow became a jinriksha, which gave place to a sampan again.

By judicious trading this saffron-colored Yankee of the East developed into a small merchant, collecting used tea-leaves, and adding dust, pickings, sweepings, colors and flavors. He existed meantime in some strange fashion, spending nothing, saving all; abandoning all luxuries, even his beloved whiff of opium, until his belt held the necessary amount for the long-deferred journey.

Then, one deliriously-delightful day, Ta-yu, outwardly unconcerned, curled up for deck passage, across the troubled Pacific, to *Magua* (America), "the beau-

tiful country." Almost within sight of the Golden Gate Ta-yu and sundry compatriots disappeared. He reappeared, months after, across the Great Divide, glassy-eyed and worn to skin and bone; but still possessed of indomitable perseverance, and with a fair-sized draft in his body-belt.

Ta-yu flourished on what other men refused, filling the place of the one-time Irishman, the Italian, the Greek. He ate his rice and scraps philosophically, rarely washing it down with any substitute for the beloved *sam-shu* (whiskey) of his native land. For a time the sworn foe of his old companion of countless generations, dirt, he drove it from its lurking places with puri-

fyng tubs-full and spurts of water.

Prospering where another would have starved, behold him at last a weazened veteran of thirty, indulging in the wiry, black moustache forbidden in his own country until he was ten years older—a prosperous restaurant-keeper in a large city of the middle West.

Ta-yu now sported all the bravery longed for in his toiling youth; silken raiment of gay coloring, a lengthened cue, and thick felted slippers. His place was gay with gilding, tortuous carving, swinging lanterns, and a tall upright "beckoning-board," on which was blazened *Tien Yih Shen* (celestial advantage combined with attention). In plum-colored silken

jacket, black crape breeches, white leggings and embroidered velvet shoes, he personified celestial prosperity under Uncle Sam's benignant rule; and was a power among his fellows.

He began to feel the need of the barbarous English speech—with it possibilities would be increased tenfold; and, seeking to attain it, Ta-yu esteemed himself fortunate in making the acquaintance of that Christian young lady, Miss Myra Jones. Thus Ta-yu learned to know the native in his own joss-house. Miss Myra gave him individual attention in Sunday school, and taught him the alphabet. Speedily she formed designs against his heathen belief. If

Ta-yu suspected them, he discreetly held his tongue, and she hoped much from his respectful attention and absorbed interest.

If only Miss Jones had not made that unfortunate present of a Noah's Ark, all might have been well. But who could anticipate that Ta-yu would so pervert the gift of a toy familiar to every one? Fortunately, Miss Myra Jones never comprehended the mischief she had wrought so innocently. The heathen Chineese is peculiar—on the word of an accepted authority.



CHAPTER IV

Ta-yu acquires some English, also a little elemental Chino-graphy, including the fact that the seat of his affections was not, as he had always supposed it to be, in the liver.

MYRA'S mother was seriously concerned over her daughter's acceptance of the post of teacher to any heathen, Tauist, Buddhist or Confucian—it mattered not



which; she did not attempt to differentiate them. The good lady's stock objection was:

"If not the first, my dear, then he must be one of the others; and probably a shade worse."

Myra smiled good-naturedly, replying:

"Do you imagine, mamma, that Mr. Hamilton would permit me to run any risks such as you fear, if danger really existed? He assures me there is no possibility of leprosy, either of mind or body. Mr. Ta-yu never suggests to me that he has been gormandizing on shark-fin, rat or puppy—nor even on innocent bird's nests, which I believe to be very expensive."

Mr. Hamilton, superintendent

of the Sunday school and senior-clerk in a stock-yards establishment, when appealed to by the anxious mother, promptly endorsed Myra's assertions, and volunteered his firm conviction that no contamination, spiritual or temporal, menaced her daughter.

So soon as he was gone Myra found opportunity.

"I am positively ashamed of you, mamma, making such unfriendly and indelicate suggestions to Mr. Hamilton. What will he think of us?"

"Well, Myra," replied the matron, "no harm is done, so far. What he may think does not trouble me. You are as head-strong as your poor father was,

and must have your own way, I suppose. I wash my hands of the matter, and only hope nothing evil will come of it. The yellow terrier is awful to contemplate, and I am thankful that the government admits no more of it."

Having thus inconsequentially disposed of the matter, Mrs. Jones buried herself again in the newspaper from which she derived increasingly wonderful conceptions of the world around her, day by day; to which Myra was condemned dutifully to listen. The mother resurrected herself once more to remark, in a tone of finality:

"Mr. Hamilton knows the world, and has a good position in

it. He is a model young man, Myra; I am pleased to arouse in him a little interest respecting your spiritual—*and* your temporal affairs, my dear.”

The triumphant manner in which Mrs. Jones announced how well she had played her cards forbade any further reference to the matter; so Myra, with heightened color, busied herself with household duties, making no reply.

The particular object which had brought John Hamilton to the Jones house, for the first time in his acquaintance with Myra, was some detail connected with a forthcoming Christmas “treat;” and, happily, the ladies were soon

far too busy to approach delicate ground again.

On retiring, Myra's last rebellious thought was, "Mr. Hamilton *is* a model young man. If mamma would only let things alone, and not indulge in leading remarks and suggestions, why ——" and a young lady's why compasses the universe!

Of this conversation and its possibilities Ta-yu had no conception. Otherwise he might not have prinked so much in joyful preparation. Certainly he never dreamed that the heathen so completely could blot out the man as to make the latter practically non-existent; as a man, Ta-yu had been thinking very seriously of late, although

not unpleasantly, judging by the occasional smile lurking in the covert of his rat-tailed moustache.

Women, Ta-yu told himself, were a necessary evil, to be handled judiciously; to be weeded out and otherwise kept down, as at home, by infanticide and other simple expedients. He was mildly surprised to find that no equivalent methods for maintaining man's superiority existed in Uncle Sam's domains. Over his pipe he lamented that unwisdom which gave all license, absolute control, and self-possession, to the inferior half of creation. That women thrived under these unnatural conditions he reluctantly admitted;

also that they were apparently the better for it.

No bachelor, of whatever color or country, can long moralize respecting the other sex without eventually considering that abstract entity, a woman, by itself. Ta-yu was greatly aided in reaching the customary channel, since he knew but one woman, and naturally turned toward her.

Miss Jones, he reasoned, had shown him marked favor, unusual even in this land of freedom. She had exhibited a decided preference for his society, giving little heed even to that dandified young fellow-countryman of hers, superintendent Hamilton. Her whole time was devoted to him, Ta-yu,

alone, during Sunday school hours. She expressed solicitude for his welfare and pride in his scholarship; and of late (delicious thought) had ventured on veiled allusions to his soul. Which soul—of his three—whether the one destined to reside in his ancestral tablet, that other which would linger in his grave, or the unlucky third, doomed to well-merited punishment in the infernal regions—which, was of very little importance. She had discussed himself with himself as never woman had before. If not interested in him, assuredly she would not. Ta-yu further possessed the comfortable knowledge that he was a man of substance, able to maintain a wife

suitably, and wanting only the wife.

Physically, the oriental standard was not reached by Myra, as a matter of course. Too tall, overtopping himself sundry objectionable inches; the hair should have been raven black, not golden in the sunlight; her eyes were too wide open and not long enough, the eyebrows too straight, her cheeks sadly deficient in breadth. But she conformed to the standards of her people. "Mith Myla Yones" was undoubtedly a pretty girl, deserving the best attire he could don in her honor.

Ta-yu's appearance created a marked sensation. As Myra excused herself to Mr. Hamilton,

and hastened to greet this last arrival, the thought in her mind was, "really, Ta-yu is rather good-looking—for a Chinaman." Blissfully unconscious of her qualified endorsement, Ta-yu beamed and kow-towed, enjoying some minutes of animated conversation with his fair teacher.

Without her inspiring companionship time dragged insufferably for Ta-yu, watching, sourly, the genial co-operation of superintendent and teacher in distributing gifts from the tree. The whole ceremony was sadly deficient in meaning to him. As the guests prepared to leave, their arms filled with mementoes, their tongues busy with the exchange of season-

able greetings, Ta-yu dolefully resumed his cap, and turned to go, overlooked and forgotten.

"Ta-yu!" whispered Mr. Hamilton warningly, "we are neglecting Ta-yu."

At this, Myra snatched up the first thing that came to hand, a child's Noah's Ark, and pressed it upon him, thanked him warmly for coming, and watched him disappear in the outer darkness, hugging her gift, and comforted exceedingly thereby.

From that small ark a huge rainbow was destined to grow, beautiful and intangible as a real one. Why was Ta-yu a man, as well as a heathen?



CHAPTER V

Ta-yu discovers more symbolism in Miss Myra Jones' gift than was intended by that young lady.

UPON reaching his room, Ta-yu promptly unwrapped his package, staring in great perplexity at the object disclosed. It was designed to represent a house-boat or sampan; wholly unseaworthy from its build,



and more nearly resembling the floating palaces he had seen on great inland rivers in this country than any type he could recall elsewhere. Means of propulsion there were none, neither steam, sail nor oar. He pondered long the purpose of it, adjudging Miss Jones to be far too kindly and intelligent to have bestowed such an article at random, without fitness in the gift.

Ta-yu smiled superciliously at the crude workmanship, while admiring its strong coloring, as he extracted vari-colored animals, one after the other, of strong family resemblance in shape and size. When all were arranged in a wide

half-circle about him, he sought inspiration in his never-failing hubble-bubble; contemplating enquiringly his novel menagerie, as revealed through rifts of smoke.

At last his attention was concentrated upon Noah, Shem and his brothers, and their respective wives; speedily becoming riveted upon a certain familiarity of outline. The hats undoubtedly were of Chinese pattern; the lathe had left tiny hollows at their tops, where a mandarin's button should have been placed. The high cheek-bones were distinctly Mongolian; the long dresses, the ceremonial robes of officials; while the shorter figures, wasp-waisted and therefore female in intention,

exhibited no feet; which he imagined to be tiny and club-footed, like those of the great Chinese ladies.

After all, Miss Jones' gift did exhibit evidence of design, and Ta-yu set resolutely to work to puzzle out the remaining elements of the problem before him.

As a menial at *Amoy* he had been barred from preparation for, or taking part in, public examinations, but much of oral tradition was familiar to him. He was staggered to find how thoroughly informed Miss Myra must be, before venturing on so appropriate a token.

Ta-yu had discovered a leaning toward symbolism on the part of

his American neighbors, as among his own people, shrewdly suspecting that Uncle Sam himself was but another such symbol or myth. At the theatre, a week earlier, he had stared open-eyed at the stage, discovering in the harlequinade another form of that myth of Paradise, which Miss Myra had so laboriously explained to him on successive Sundays. Harlequin in spangles (the serpent or dragon) pursued luckless Eve (Columbine), Pantaloon (primitive man) striving to hinder him; and the evil one (Clown) enjoying the mishaps he contrived for them all. Ta-yu strove to make all this plain to Miss Myra on the following Sunday. But she could not in the

least comprehend him, and contented herself with the platitude that theatres themselves were wicked, and to be avoided; which, in turn, was quite beyond her pupil's understanding.

Ta-yu thought, spoke, wrote—in his native tongue, in symbols; and here was a whole table-full (monstrously Archaic most of them), for his especial benefit. How Miss Myra could have fathomed so much, supposedly beyond her ken, he could not determine—but love will find a way. Here was the water-buffalo, to which Ta-yu himself, in the Chinese cycle, belonged. Here the beneficent magpie and dog, as well as the evil cat and crow.

He ranged in order upon the table before him, the Fox, Keeper of the Seal; his excellency, the grasping cash Tiger; the white "spiritual" Fowl; the heavenly Dog; his mightiness, the holy king, the Monkey; and many another strange creature, whose likeness he had seen in pictured representations of the colossal animal statues of the temple of *Ghingtsoo*, among the wondrous *Ming* tombs near *Nankow*. Great birds there were too, half the size of elephants, but surely birds—or were they seated cats?

The personal application, and full meaning deduced from them, came to him gradually. It grew to be a nightly habit, the day's

work done, to fasten the door of his room securely. Illuminating it brilliantly, he would bring forth the Ark, spreading its contents wide before him ; no exegete ever gave Noah more attention. He studied them in countless combinations, as if they had been chessmen ; and he, wholly ignorant of the game, was seeking to discover the powers and properties of the pieces, and the rules governing them.

At last, Ta-yu established, to his own satisfaction, the far-reaching purport of the mysterious gift.

He, Ta-yu, however deficient in biblical knowledge, knew his own catechism, or its equivalent,

fairly well. How the first principle, *Moving*, produced *Rest*; from them, together, came *All Things*, and, lastly, *Perfect Men*—fifty thousand years having been consumed in these processes, after the formation of Heaven and Earth, before Man appeared. Soon (as Ta-yu recalled) divine *Fohi* or *Ya* founded China, inventing dress-making, music, sacrifice at the solstices, symbolic writing, and dividing the year into $365\frac{1}{4}$ days.

His son, *Shun*, the next emperor, was followed by *Yu*, the great *Ta-yu*, from whom he himself derived his name; tracing a meandering, traditional descent from him. *Yu* in nine years drained off the waters of the great flood; the

mighty inundation by the vast *Yellow River*, itself coeval with creation.

Ta-yu remembered some casual reference to a flood by Miss Myra. A flood, when the Celestial Kingdom possessed a record of sixty-three—sixty-three proofs of divine displeasure!

Ages after, still in Ta-yu's traditional line, came the great *Meaou-Haou* (emperor) *Chow* or *Chou-sui*, last of the *Yin* dynasty, who, with *Ta-ke's* assistance, first formed menageries of horses, dogs, rare animals and curious birds, and incidentally blessed a waiting world with chop-sticks.

Piecing these facts and much beside together, like a true

Chinese puzzle, Miss Myra Jones' intention was now clear.

The sampan itself stood for that treasured memory, "The Delight of My Soul," doubtless still creeping over the waters between the inner and outer towns of that exceedingly dirty city, *Amoy*.

The animals, two of each sort, male and female after their kind, conveyed a delicate hint—that it is not good to be alone. Of the human figures, also in pairs, two of larger size represented *Yu* and his prospective consort, with their suite indicative of prosperity. All others, biped and quadruped alike, implied vast dominion for Yu and his bride over many things, wild and domesticated. The rabbits

and chickens were already in evidence, housed securely in Ta-yu's back yard.

Yu, forty centuries dead, could be naught but a symbol of living Ta-yu. The fair giver's wishes for Ta-yu's continued prosperity, her forethought in providing him with a helpmate, permitted but one conclusion; she would not be unwilling to share these blessings with him.

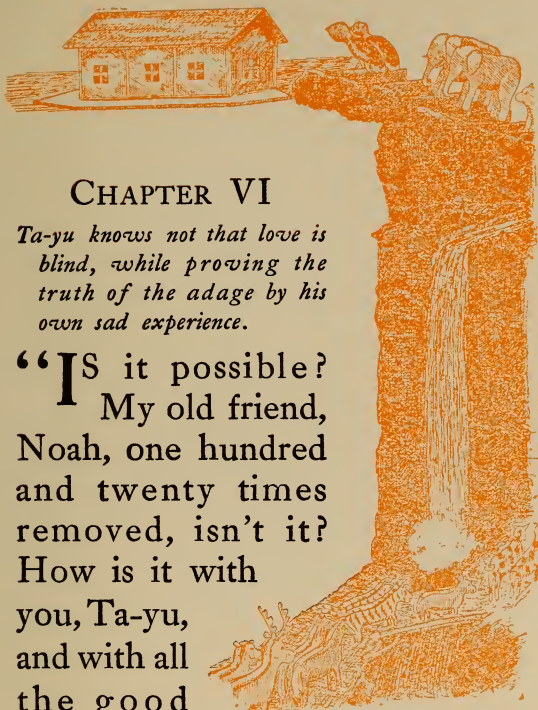
Miss Jones had exhibited the most intimate knowledge of his pedigree, while gracefully omitting all allusion to luckless Chang-yu, still awaiting suitable interment, potted, his head between his knees.

The gift had become a delicately-veiled declaration of love.

Radical changes in Ta-yu's personal appearance followed, transforming a not ill-looking Mongolian into a rather rowdyish and wholly common-place corner-loafer. His pig-tail, ruthlessly discarded, was coiled serpent-wise in a vacant corner of the treasured Ark. Flowing, flowered silks were replaced by an ill-fitting suit of "hand-me-downs." Noisy, clumsy brogans succeeded to felt-padded velvet-embroidered clogs. The transformation was viewed with dismay by Miss Myra, who could not conceal her dissatisfaction with it.

Whatever scraps of sentiment, romance, poetry, there might have been in her conceptions of her oriental pupil disappeared with his silk cap and cue. The task of teaching him became irksome and distasteful. Ta-yu was unpleasantly aware of a change that tied his nimble, clicking tongue, making him mute and sullen where he had been apt and alert.

“I coveted another man’s horse and lost my own ox,” thought Ta-yu, quoting a native proverb, as he essayed every explanation except the right one. Perhaps Uncle Sam is wise in refusing citizenship to one so incapable of assimilation, no matter how ardently Ta-yu desired it.



CHAPTER VI

Ta-yu knows not that love is blind, while proving the truth of the adage by his own sad experience.

“**I**S it possible?
My old friend,
Noah, one hundred
and twenty times
removed, isn't it?
How is it with
you, Ta-yu,
and with all
the good
people of *Amoy*?”

This greeting surprised Ta-yu,

a few weeks later, upon his punctual arrival at Sunday school. His old acquaintance, the missionary, had made a flying trip home, to greet old friends; and, for the good of the cause, to exploit his experiences in distant lands. The reverend Thomas Kitcat's patriotism was effusive as ever, and rather difficult to explain; since he was originally a foundling, and indebted, for a provoking surname, to the questionable humor of a supervisor. He was pleased to discover in Ta-yu an example ready to hand, to aid him on the lecture-platform, and otherwise illustrate his points.

In abandoning his picturesque dress and customs, however, Ta-yu

had almost destroyed his own usefulness in these particulars. He grieved his old friend by emphatically refusing to resume them, even temporarily. Mr. Kitcat regretted changes he could neither control nor account for, on more intimate acquaintance with his old-time protege and ferryman.

Ta-yu was not disposed to pose either as a horrible example (ethically considered) or a brand snatched from the burning. In some respects, his practical knowledge exceeded that of his would-be patron; and he had, as already indicated, a strong incentive to assert himself as a man and a brother. As the dime to the dollar, so did Ta-yu, one-time

cooley of *Amoy*, compare with the almost-offensively prosperous Mr. Ta-yu of today.

Mr. Kitcat was justified in thinking himself something of a personator, and his strong card was—"opium, costly, baneful, deadly," as he customarily closed his peroration.

Kitcat could, and did, look pallid, glare, shrug his shoulders up, draw his head down, and otherwise reproduce an "opium devil" very passably; creating a peculiar thrill in an audience, agreeable to them and gratifying to himself. He could manipulate an opium-outfit in pantomimic representation of its use, "hitting the pipe" as well as could anyone not supplied

with the "dope" itself. He dwelt upon the after-sneezings and gapings and gripings; he so compared vices as to make indulgence in liquor comparatively respectable, and almost commendable; he emphasized striking resemblances between Chinese customs and those in the Scriptures; he expatiated upon the value of the Native Helper. It was provoking to find that the one native on the spot was unable or unwilling to testify to the truth of these statements.

The missionary was hurt by Ta-yu's indifference; he repeated to John Hamilton, in Miss Jones' hearing, his regret at Ta-yu's unwillingness to aid him. Ta-yu, suspecting he was thus discussed,

resented it by increased churlishness and indisposition to please. Finally, he became irregular in attendance on Sundays, and the missionary hunted him up.

Mr. Kitcat found that the Chinaman had disposed of his restaurant, and he followed Ta-yu to a laundry in the stockyards district, some miles away. Ta-yu was unkempt and in native costume again, but for a squat derby hat that covered the spot where the cue had been.

In discussing his visit afterward with young Hamilton, the reverend gentleman admitted that the situation was beyond him; and hinted at some mild hallucination, or at least absurdities and incon-

sistencies, indulged in by Ta-yu. He concluded,

“I shall keep track of him, Hamilton. He interested me in the long ago, and now he is a puzzle I am not inclined to give up. Ta-yu has abandoned a prosperous eating-house, which he had been neglecting for some time. Now he mopes, and pays little attention to his business.”

John Hamilton accompanied the missionary on his next call, but was received with scant civility, so he did not repeat his visit. Mr. Kitcat slowly recovered some of the old-time ascendancy, being at last invited into Ta-yu's own room. Here he discovered some singular developments.

Besides the customary furnishings, meager and absurdly insufficient, there were decorations, Ta-yu's own handiwork, that repaid investigation, they were so decidedly unusual.

The sampan, the Noah's Ark, and its contents, were the principal features in a sort of shrine covering one of the longer walls. Evidently constructed with loving care, of costly materials, it held Kitcat's attention from the moment he first saw it. In Chinese characters were sundry mottoes and proverbs, on long upright scrolls of red silk; and beneath a tiny central ornament, daintily carven, were the words, 天女, *celestial woman*. This was a small wooden

figure, richly dressed in brocaded silks, minute in detail, representing a Chinese lady of the upper classes. An odd blunder, as Kitcat decided, was the distinct European cast of features—"Quite a passable likeness to a little teacher I remember at the Sunday school," thought Kitcat. Had he known it to be the work of Ta-yu's own hands, and that its core, or groundwork, was that identical and very wooden female, the wife of Noah, Kitcat's surprise would have been greater.

At the feet of the little lady stood *Tseang-kuen*, "pacificator of the seas," a fashionably-attired Chinese gentleman in the latest mode, his features modeled after

Ta-yu's own—for the base of this figure Noah himself had been employed.

In costly intricacies of teak-wood carving, skilfully touched with gold and colors, were numerous other fantastic figures of men, women and animals, each a type, and with an interpretation befitting Ta-yu's earlier Buddhistic leanings, Kitcat saw at a glance. Not until afterward did he learn that all these various figures had been the original tenants of that wooden Ark, whose receipt had temporarily worked such havoc with Ta-yu's affections and fortunes, and which had been treated by their owner in a fashion peculiarly his own.

The actual investment of skill, time and money in this singular arrangement of cabinets, oriental brackets and shelves; in the shrine itself, its lanterns and incense-burners; harmoniously interwoven in a tracery of ivory, precious metals, rare woods and mother-of-pearl—would alone represent more than the difference between Ta-yu's former opulence and his present reduced circumstances.

On subsequent visits Mr. Kitcat learned how many of these unique effects had been produced. The original lines of the Ark were maintained, although now covered and inlaid with ebony, ivory, silver and shell; and the visitor ventured

on suggestive enquiry, being permitted to witness the transformation of the last piece yet to be treated, a camel, whose clumsy outlines made its origin unmistakable.

Ta-yu had dipped it, like all the others, successively in tiny pots of thick varnish and paints of diverse colors, drying it thoroughly after each dip; and now, at his friend's invitation, resumed active work upon it. With delicate tools and fingers possessed of a marvelous cunning, Ta-yu cut through the overlapping layers of enamel, as if carving a cameo, until the contrasting colors and delicate outlines had transformed a child's uncouth plaything into an unique

work of art, accurate in every detail, finished like a jewel.

The patient, painstaking labor, and its wholly useless, however beautiful, results, interested the missionary, too familiar with oriental temperaments and methods to question where confidence was withheld. He perceived that there was a connection, a vital one, between this slow and costly undertaking and the great change that had come over the man, Tayu himself. Especially was this noticeable, when this last remaining figure was placed in its waiting niche, the shrine completed, and a gray apathy seized its designer. He gazed at his work with body drooped, head down, through

eyes half-shut and bleared from intense application; while his sinewy yellow hands hung listless with half-curved, claw-like fingers, from which the tool clattered unheeded to the floor.

Failing to rouse Ta-yu at this time, Kitcat took his leave, resolved to call again the sooner and more frequently, since he felt the influence of some strong and very human passion dominating this once ambitious alien; now almost a child again, since his self-imposed task was accomplished, and nothing further could move him just now.

Myra Jones, as she glances at her handsome husband, feels that she has particular reason to be

thankful to the reverend Mr. Kitcat for the resolve he then made, and for the manner in which he carried it out.



CHAPTER VII

*Ta-yu disconcerts his friends;
but he makes overtures to
Charon, the domesticated
water-buffalo, which are
graciously entertained.*

MYRA could not forget her bright ex-pupil and devoted servitor, Ta-yu, mourning his defection, and confessing to her mother that she felt hurt at his ingratitude.

"My child," commented Mrs.



Jones, "I consider it fortunate that you see less of him; Ta-yu has his place in the scheme of creation, no doubt. He was entirely out of place in any contact or association with my daughter."

Had she been less discreet, Mrs. Jones would have admitted her gratification at the turn affairs had taken. Ta-yu's sole value to Myra, in her mother's belief, was because he had chanced to create and cement a cordial understanding between Myra and John Hamilton. This condition was now firmly established, and might develop, the mother hoped, into a closer tie. She could afford to be magnanimous, so continued,

"Why the man left as he did,

and when he did, I never could understand, could you, dear?"

"No, mamma. Ta-yu was devoted to the school, and making excellent progress. He was showing increased pride in himself also—you remember how richly dressed he was at the Christmas gathering? He looked almost handsome."

Mrs. Jones' sniff was susceptible of various interpretations. Myra construed it as conveying consent, and went on,

"Then, all at once, he sacrificed his cue, dressed in a hideously-commonplace way, acted quite unlike himself, and ended by dropping attendance altogether. I should much like to know

what it all means. What is your opinion, Mr. Kitcat?"

The latter found it difficult to offer any solution.

"These superficial changes are evidence of a more radical and deep-seated one, and the Mongolian is utterly opposed to change. But there is some mystery in his behavior which I cannot fathom, unless offense should have been given or his prejudices outraged by some one ignorant of their existence."

Put on their mettle by this suggestion, both ladies promptly disavowed any such action. They went over sundry trivial happenings connected with Ta-yu, no one of which warranted this as-

sumption, as they decided, until interrupted by Mr. Kitcat.

"You gave Ta-yu a Noah's Ark, Miss Myra. Why, pray?"

She laughed.

"He had been overlooked in the distribution of gifts, and I picked up almost the first thing that came to hand."

"A most inappropriate gift, Myra," said her mother, severely. "A child's toy to a man! You forgot that, while teaching him words of one syllable, he is nevertheless far older than you. I am afraid she may have hurt his feelings, aren't you, Mr. Kitcat?"

The missionary was in a brown study, but roused himself to say, "Yes," he was sorry to say that

"Ta-yu's feelings might have been hurt by the gift." But he was emphatically opposed to any attempt at explanation.

"No," said he, "the less said the sooner mended. To undertake to explain would only create a possibility of greater complications. The people of the two hemispheres do not think alike."

Kitcat pondered, on his way home, all the consequences of Myra's unlucky gift—Ta-yu's grave misconception, the house he had builded upon the sands.

"So," said Kitcat, aloud, "*she* is the *celestial female*, and hence the likeness I discover. Well, I see no help for it, now. Why will people feed monkeys with pea-

nuts? Poor, foolish Ta-yu! I hope the incident is ended, and that no further harm may come of it."

When next calling upon Ta-yu, Mr. Kitcat fancied that he had passed him, loitering at an alley's mouth, on the watch, yet seeking to avoid observation. His suspicion became certainty when, upon arrival at Ta-yu's laundry, he found the owner absent. The door was unlocked and the visitor passed on upstairs into the shrine-room. The air was thick with incense, otherwise all seemed as before. Looking about, Kitcat noticed a small heap of feathery ash upon the centre table; more

ashes were scattered at the feet of the *celestial woman*.

Knowing how very cleanly Ta-yu was in his habits, he sought for some explanation of this disorder. Kitcat's long residence among alien races had taught him the value of close observation and ever-present watchfulness; nothing was a trifle, he had learned, until fully comprehended. In momentary expectation of Ta-yu's return, and appreciating how undignified his own position would be, how lame his explanation, if caught prying, he nevertheless set the door ajar to have warning of Ta-yu's approach by the creaking stair, and pursued his investigations. His friends

might be gainers by anything he should happen upon.

At a corner of the table, on which was the little heap of ashes, was a stout bundle of yellow papers, each sheet a little smaller than a dollar-bill, and bearing a rude representation of two animal heads, those of a buffalo and of a dog.

At sight of these slips Kitcat whirled about, intently regarding the shrine and its central goddess. The incense-sticks had been very recently cared for, and were so numerous that their dense vapors deadened the light of a half-dozen blazing candles.

The reverend investigator appeared to have discovered that of

which he was in search. He seemed no longer in doubt, but blew out all the candles rapidly one after the other, and pinched and so snuffed out the incense-sticks. He glanced about to feel assured that he had left no other evidence of his visit, and hastily left the house, carefully closing the door behind him.

He did not go in the direction of the street-car line for home, but toward Hamilton's office, where that gentleman, as he had anticipated, was getting ready to leave.

"Ah, John," said he, "I was close by, on business, and hoped to catch you in season to enjoy

your company on the journey home."

They sallied out together.

In passing the alley, where Kitcat had caught a glimpse of the Chinaman, he looked keenly but covertly about, and surprised Ta-yu noiselessly approaching them. In the act of greeting, Ta-yu stumbled clumsily, and reaching out for support in the effort to keep his balance, he grabbed Hamilton's coat with his clawing hands. These were dirty, and left ashen smears where Ta-yu had clutched at Hamilton's clothing. He apologized promptly, but Kitcat turned about, lifting the soiled garment, and ostenta-

tiously wiped it with his handkerchief.

“You must be more careful, Ta-yu,” cried Kitcat, sharply. “Mr. Hamilton might not have noticed how careless you were. We are not in China, remember.”

He was rewarded with a look of indescribable malevolence, which disappeared instantly, as Ta-yu apologized abjectly, and then left them.

“You were severe, Mr. Kitcat,” said Hamilton, pleasantly. “Accidents cannot be avoided, and Ta-yu has been most polite.”

“I accept a Chinaman’s politeness as a matter of course,” replied the clergyman. “I spoke as I did, for the effect upon him.”

“Oh, surely,” replied the other.

Mr. Kitcat decided not to enlighten his companion as to his own explanation of Ta-yu's action. He feared to make himself ridiculous, and doubted whether his friend would believe him. That Ta-yu had a perfect understanding Kitcat felt assured.

The fatal charm, daubed upon an enemy's clothing, and designed to affect his health, his mental condition, even his life, would be powerless, in Ta-yu's belief, since his intended victim had been made aware of his purpose. Kitcat's action was to impress that fact upon the Chinaman, to make Ta-yu comprehend that his evil intention was known. Ta-yu

would now fear its recoil upon his own devoted head, with all attendant evils, and might not make any further attempts.

Kitcat dismissed the incident by quoting the Chinese proverb, "the magpie's voice is good, but his heart is bad," striving to impress Hamilton with the need for caution.

John laughed at him, as he had expected.

"Why, Mr. Kitcat, Ta-yu would not harm a mouse—unless he was very hungry!"

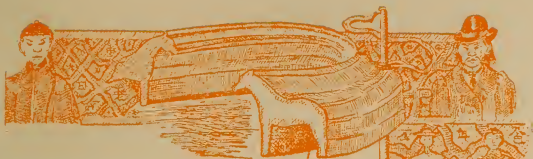
He went on to tell how the lonely Chinaman, at first tormented, and even in danger of rough treatment, had, by his unvarying good nature and manifest

friendliness, won the good will of the brawny fellows at the yards; until now they assumed a certain protectorate over him, "and it would go hard with anyone doing Ta-yu a mischief."

"He will watch outdoor operations by the hour together. Sheep, you know, are especially stubborn to lead. Sometimes the men endeavor to stir up a pen-full into spirals; and, if the gate be opened at the right moment, they will follow a goat, as leader, wherever wanted. The goat is a never-failing attraction to Ta-yu; but after he had bowled the Chinaman over a couple of times, they were less friendly.

“Then the great trained steer, Charon, who conducts his witless comrades along the runways and up the slopes, deftly turning aside at the right moment, while they rush on, heedless and confident, to death and dismemberment—Ta-yu has struck up quite a friendship with him, and seems never to tire of watching and admiring Charon’s tactics.”

All of which seemed very foreign to any possibilities for evil, but Mr. Kitcat’s suspicions, once aroused, would not down, and he thought with grim satisfaction of Ta-yu’s return to his desecrated shrine, the incense-sticks out and the candles dead.



CHAPTER VIII

*Ta-yu meditates full and sweet
revenge upon his successful
rival.*

MRS. JONES was, for once, very near the truth in her surmises. In various ways it had become known to Ta-yu that he had been juggled (as he phrased it) into believing that a child's toy was an emblem of love; and John Ham-



ilton, innocently enough, was responsible for Ta-yu's enlightenment. Ta-yu felt proportionately insulted; for had he not, when he became a man, put away childish things? That Myra, herself, whom he credited, rightfully, with delicacy, should so play upon his feelings, as he imagined, and stab him through his most exalted emotion, his hopeless passion for herself, was a cruel addition to his woes.

Ta-yu abandoned Christian associations altogether, and brooded half the night before the monumental shrine. He had made no attempt to relight or perfume it, since he had returned to find it dark, after his unsuccessful at-

tempt upon John Hamilton. At times he would shake his fist at the "*celestial woman*," and hurl invective at her.

"Oh, thou that hast the mouth of Buddha, but the heart of a serpent, may fish be thy coffin and water thy grave; on the mountains mayest thou meet with tigers, and on the plains may the crows devour thee!"

His own people have a saying, that their "mouths are exceedingly filthy," and Ta-yu, when in this mood, fully justified it.

At times he would kneel penitently, asking forgiveness humbly, as if the tiny wooden image were herself. Truly, he was hard hit, from sheer ignorance and inability

to understand or assimilate occidental methods. Ignorance of the law excuses no one. And, while by this time well aware that he was supplanted in Miss Myra's good graces by John Hamilton, Ta-yu met that young gentleman frequently, without any exhibition of malice, and with respectful, friendly greetings that won cordial recognition.

Once, when Ta-yu was admiring the great steer, Charon, at his peculiar work, Hamilton was passing through the yards, and paused beside him. A steep runway zigzagged with easy turns from the ground level to a fifth floor where were the killing-rooms. The whole contrivance,

while seemingly insecure, was braced with broad beams and stout oaken timbers. The dense air was befogged with the foul odors of steaming blood; belching tanks were clouded with smoke and steam, through which the veteran steer trotted, leading his fellows to the Elysian fields.

Hamilton, as he stood there, was reminded, in some odd way, of his last summer's vacation, and told Ta-yu of a narrow, precipitous village-street in the far Azores. How, long ago, pirates landed, drove all before them, and were battering down doors, when a crafty herdsman drove the homing cattle down upon them, with ever increasing and deadly

speed, until the trapped marauders lay crushed and mangled beneath the avenging hoofs in the fatal *cul de sac*. To which Ta-yu listened with glistening eyes and breathless interest.

Another time, Hamilton came up behind Ta-yu, who was staring into a school-store window at a very small Noah's Ark; so, finding him interested, Hamilton went inside, and they examined the simple toy together. Hamilton was able, by pantomime, to make plain to him how great, wooden circles were turned upon the lathe, whose cross section, sliced, exhibited the outlines of an animal, that required but a tail and a dip into a paint pot to complete it.

So Ta-yu learned that his treasured gift of great price was but a cheap, common, machine-made toy, illustrating a biblical story, and in no way connected with his own remarkable ancestry; his disillusionment was accomplished. He promptly refused Hamilton's peace-offering, the little ark that had so interested him, which John, ignorant of any similar gift, had offered. Ta-yu decided, on the spot, that one was as bad as the other.

Hamilton proposed to ask why Ta-yu had abandoned his teacher, hoping to reawaken his interest, but no convenient opportunity presented itself. He casually mentioned these chance encounters to

Mr. Kitcat, with the intention of convincing the latter that his warning was far-fetched and uncalled for. The clergyman listened with grave interest, especially at mention of the Ark; and he ventured a query which established that Hamilton knew nothing as to Myra's gift, and its evil effect upon Ta-yu's fortunes.

Mr. Kitcat dismissed various ideas as impracticable, until he hit upon a recommendation to Ta-yu to return to his native land. There was some social recognition possible for him there now, he told him, and, even in his reduced circumstances, Ta-yu could pose among his old-time fellows

as a magnate, a man of experience and wide knowledge of the world.

When all this was recited to Ta-yu, and he turned a deaf ear, Kitcat tried another tack. He referred to Ta-yu's father, Chang-yu, still awaiting fitting burial, and offered to furnish the necessary funds, if the other did not possess them. Ta-yu listened respectfully as ever; his eyes shone; once a big tear rolled down his cheek, and splashed unheeded on the back of his clenched hand. But Ta-yu declined this, and all other recommendations, compelling Mr. Kitcat to realize that he must let matters take their course.

Kitcat was sorry for his own failure. Ta-yu seemed on the

verge of collapse, physical and mental; and, so far as the missionary understood the situation, deserved and received his hearty sympathy. He feared the results of the struggle upon the man himself, and also that his ill-regulated, almost unbalanced mind might lead him to seek revenge upon his enemies, could he find a way.

Single-handed, and dreading he knew not what, Kitcat waited and watched. He knew that Ta-yu had indulged in one absurd attempt at revenge, and something more serious might confront them at any moment.

In his perplexity he told Hamilton just what the previous at-

tempt had been, but did not make the least impression. Hamilton likened it to "fetich," and pooh-poohed the thought of any possible harm to himself. Myra was not referred to by either, at this time or in this connection. Ta-yu's infatuation was too monstrous and impossible for John Hamilton or the object of Ta-yu's affections to dream of the existence of such a sentiment.



CHAPTER IX

Ta-yu summons Charon to his assistance, and empties his Noah's Ark.

TA-YU'S condition demanded expert treatment. An added evil was his loneliness, living apart from his fellow countrymen, and not courting nor accepting any social relations. His own people, those who were orthodox, resented his indif-



ference to them in his prosperous days, and condemned his departures from national usage in dress, habits and diet; while Sam-kin, chief among "the religious banditti of depraved ethics" (the reformers), denounced Ta-yu as *chok-ka*, neither fat nor lean; largely because Sam-kin failed to understand him.

To defy classification is an unpardonable sin; his abandonment of a prosperous business also was looked upon with suspicion. Some questioned his mental condition—his heart (the seat of intellect) was affected; his kidneys weak, and their attribute, wisdom, wanting.

So Ta-yu pottered and mooned about, victim of a hopeless attach-

ment, impossible of realization as if he were crying for the moon; which he knew, making matters worse. But one passion, with any hope of fruition, remained—revenge; and the anticipation of this sustained him, keeping body and souls (all four) together. He could not determine whether vengeance should be wreaked on the friend who had supplanted him, succeeding where he had failed, or on the woman, the object of his regard. His little business dwindled under neglect; often he went hungry, scarce conscious of it; he wandered aimlessly about; but in whatever direction he chanced to go, his goal was ever the same—the fence against which

he would loll, overlooking the great steer, Charon's, field of operation.

For Charon attracted him in many ways. His majestic proportions and lordly bearing, his immunity from the fate of his kind, conferring immortality upon him; his great curving horns, of a six-foot spread from point to point; his indifference to the fate of others, and his treacherous handling of them—all drew Ta-yu, whose "patron" was the buffalo, and this huge beast to him naught but a domesticated water-buffalo, a monarch among them; and he, Ta-yu, a friend of Cæsar's.

Ta-yu courted him, offered sugar and other tit-bits to him,

and was endured by the magnanimous monster, suffered to pet him and to serve his humors. The insignificant, shriveled biped suffered by contrast with the other's magnificent lines. But this thought never occurred to Ta-yu, who gloried in Charon's strength as though it were one of his own attributes, and in his superiority to his four-footed fellows as a patent of nobility conferred by himself, poor starveling.

Charon would sweep into command before an incoming drove (that hesitated in dread of evil sights and cruel martyrdom), and so confidently lead the way, with devouring stride and sweep of lordly limb, that they would fall in

behind, and trot happily after, up and up; until they would seek to stop, troubled at their leader's disappearance. Charon had stepped to one side, in a stall-like widening of the upward timber path, affording standing room for himself alone, while the blind ruck behind him swept his hesitating comrades full into the reeking shambles.

Hamilton, in passing, hailed Ta-yu with

“Grand old fellow, isn't he, Ta-yu? By the way, your old teacher, Miss Myra, is coming out today, and I shall show her some of the processes. I hope we may run across you again.”

Coming here! Today, and with him! In an instant a possible plan of action was clear, as if so ordered from the beginning. Would the adverse Fates be kind for once? These millions of animal lives annually sacrificed here, millions of money expended in buildings and plants, the tens of thousands employed here, were thereafter merely units in a scheme for revenge that should fittingly end the tragedy. After Ta-yu, the deluge! The clouds encompassing him, for such a weary while, were clearing. Heaven was past; but Hell beckoned, and should not be disappointed in the chosen one, Ta-yu of *Amoy*.

How? Well, he could not exactly tell, he admitted wearily. That would be arranged, like all things else under the sun. The tools were there, he but another instrument. And now was the appointed time! He must have lost his senses temporarily, hereabouts, for all knowledge of time, space and surroundings disappeared. He was dimly conscious of being flung contemptuously aside, the splashes of warm, liquid filth reminding him somehow of that early experience in distant *Amoy*.

Now he was aware of a colossal blood-soaked biped, again of a superior, roaring horned-monster! *Hieng Tieng Siong Ta*, the King

of the Sombre Heavens, favored him, at last! Red, the color of joy, of good, flared all about him. The heavens were scarlet, the walls ensanguined, the pools through which he splashed bore the same tint—the voice of his four-footed brethren's blood called to him from the ground. It suffused his eyes, a fitting carnival of clotting gore!

Then, for a brief space, he saw clearly. Beneath him walked Myra, leaning confidently on John Hamilton's arm. Dainty skirts were lifted, to avoid contamination; but their heads were in the upper heavens, they were conscious of no one save themselves. A look of happiness was in her

eyes as she raised them fondly to rest upon her lover's face; supremely content, anywhere, since he was with her—a look that drove Ta-yu mad again; since it never could be for him, often as he had dreamed of it.

Next, Ta-yu was dimly conscious of majestic Charon sweeping past him, leading trusting companions to their certain doom, and threatening crazed, crouching Ta-yu with heedless, trampling hoofs as they swirled by.

A glimpse of God's fair sunshine once more—and there, far below him, John Hamilton stood, on the timbered zigzag, alone. Above the place, where Hamilton stood, climbed high the tortuous,

dizzy runway; below—a long, long distance, lay safety.

On the instant, Ta-yu was flying, climbing; snarling like a wild beast as he ran; bent nearly double. Ta-yu, or what had been he, now remorseless, ruthless, a fiend incarnate, reached Charon, smoothed the great beast's side, mimicked the familiar word of command, and the steer turned for the descent. Ta-yu now rained cruel blows upon him; the walk became a trot, a gallop, a rush ever increasing in speed adown the precipitous pathway.

Charon dashed through his climbing mates, arrested, turned them, like another Sheridan at Winchester—and they came, an

awful avalanche, insensate, irresistible as runaway locomotives; the monster leading, themselves compact behind. They dashed madly down, to sweep the fated spot whereon stood—Ta-yu could scarce believe his eyes—Myra!

Not John, his accursed rival and false friend, but Myra! Directly in the path of that sudden death streaming down upon her, loosed by his own hand! And he loved her!

Ta-yu was over the rail, in a twinkling; dropping, falling, clinging momentarily like a cat, now shooting downward again like a plummet, gripping the supporting timbers until he was well below

her; then over the fence again, like a flash, beside her.

He had her up on the fence rail, gripping it hard, as that mighty medley of bloodshot eyes and dripping tongues, of protruding horns and stiffened tails—like an army with lances and banners—swept past with thundering hoofs. Faint and sick she clung there, to be rejoined a moment later by John, speechless with alarm.

At their feet a mangled, awful thing showed faint signs of life. Tremors shook it, strange, choked, gurgling moans exuded from it. Ta-yu's remaining semblance to humanity was small.

“He has given his life for you, Myra,” said John, brokenly.

“Privilege and opportunity were his. He took them greedily, as I would have done.”



CHAPTER X

*Ta-yu realizes that Death is the
Reckoning of Heaven.*

“HE cannot last long; nothing material can be done for him,” was the medical opinion, tendered at first glance. “It is a wonder that life remains at all.”

So the patrol-wagon deposited Ta-yu at his own door, and there was carried up the tortuous stairway, head-

foremost, a something destined speedily to repeat the journey, feet-first.

For hours, life flickered—the surgeon alone had occupation. Mr. Kitcat and John Hamilton sat silent the while; the latter making frequent visits, where Myra waited for tidings.

Then, appealing fingers and an indication of vague desire in the one unbandaged eye, seeking something unknown to the watchers beside the cot. All at once Kitcat signed to John, the doctor nodded approval, the cot was lifted bodily and placed so that its occupant might look upon the shrine. Quiet for a time, the fluttering began again, oddly sug-

gestive of a singed moth's movements, in the semi-obscurity of the guttering candle-flame.

Whispers, and again nodded assent. The remaining candles were lighted, while the incense-sticks smoldered and spat startlingly in the quietude of the sick room.

"Countenancing idolatry, I am afraid," murmured the missionary, "but, if it eases him—it is part of the *medical* treatment."

Soon he was uneasy once more, perplexing the watchers; until John left the room, returning, leading Myra by the hand. The mutilated form lay quiescent during his absence, then shook with

feeble efforts to raise itself upon the pallet, the face transformed.

Myra came forward, knelt beside dying Ta-yu, her arm about him, and calling him her preserver, her brave defender, her hero! He muttered something in his native tongue. Kitcat approached, shook his head as the others sought his eyes enquiringly; then, mastering himself with an effort, he replied to Myra's mute petition.

"A little delirious, and back on the beaches near *Amoy*. Something about a rainbow, glorious rest, *celestial female*, and 'the delight of my soul.' Steeped in old traditions, I should judge, babbling of boyhood; the end is near."

Again the impassive physician inclined his head, nodding emphatically—very, very near.

A superhuman effort, and Ta-yu was sitting up, unsupported.

“That should be impossible,” said the doctor, aside, to Kitcat, watching his patient keenly the while. “What does he want now?”

Myra appeared to know. Still kneeling, she imprisoned the feebly-moving, clammy hand within her own two little ones, kissing it and dropping tears upon it. For a moment Ta-yu lay content. Then the motion began again, seeking something more.

Myra beckoned John forward, clasping hands with him. Ta-yu’s hand played aimlessly about, then

settled surely, firmly, upon them, as does a butterfly upon a flower. Renunciation complete, he fell back exhausted on the pillow.

A low greeting to Mr. Kitcat, a few half-uttered words to which the latter made suitable reply.

“He wishes you, Myra, to accept this little figure from him,” placing the “*celestial female*” in her hand, as he spoke. “I have promised to see to the suitable reinterment of his father’s remains, when I return to *Amoy*,” interpreted the missionary.

“Nothing in life becomes him like the leaving it. It is worth while to seek to save them; for they are men like ourselves, and

we are our brothers' keepers," he added, half to himself.

Deep silence, awaiting the end; then came a last vigorous pressure upon the clasped hands beneath his own. Quiet for a space, broken by the doctor, as he came forward, readjusting the bandage over the now-glazing eye, and pulling up the coverlet.

He blew out the candles and extinguished the incense-sticks, as they passed out of the room together, leaving Ta-yu to

the Reckoning of Heaven.

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